كيف نؤمن باليوم الآخر؟

لشيخ محمد بن صالح العثيمين

How do we Believe in the LAST DAY?

This booklet is part of the Arabic book, 'Sharh Hadeeth Jibra'eel' by Shaikh Muhammad ibn Saleh al-Uthaimeen (rahimahullah)

Translated by Shawana A. Aziz



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Contents

It is called the Last Day because there is no day after it.

Man either has stages or is nothing.

Allah says, "Has there not been over man a period of time when he was nothing to be mentioned?" [Soorah al-Insan (76): 1] (the stage mentioned in this verse is the first stage of man)

then man became a fetus (which is the second stage of man) and later he began performing deeds in the world (which is the third stage of man). Man's state in the world is more complete than his state of being a fetus.

(after coming into this world) man moves on to the fourth stage, i.e., the Barzakh (the stage that begins after death and ends at the establishment of the Hour). His state in the Barzakh is more complete than his state in the world.

Man further moves on to the fifth stage, i.e., the Last Day. His condition at this stge is more complete than all the previous stages.

Explanation of the above is that man is without doubt more deficient in his mother's womb than his condition in this world. Allah says, "Allah has brought you out from the wombs of your mothers while you know nothing. And He gave you hearing, sight and hearts that you might give thanks (to Allah)." [Soorah an-Nahl (16): 78]

Once he is out of his mother's womb, he possesses knowledge, hearing, sight and actions. Man's condition in this world is not always serene rather it is peaceful and troubled, it involves hardships and relief, discrimination and justice, good and evil.

You are now young and strong but one of the two things will occur to you; death or old age - therefore the life of this world is blemished and this is why it is called Dunya (Arabic word for world), from the root word, dana'a (i.e., base, lowly, ignoble) and also Dunuw (i.e., imminent, close). The world is thus lowly in comparison to the Hereafter.

Man's condition in the Barzakh is more perfect than his state in this world because his condition in the Barzakh is stable. If he is from the people of good then he is blessed in his grave. His grave is widened as far as his eyes can see. It is furnished from Paradise and a door into the Paradise is opened for him. This cannot be achieved in this world.

(the stage of the Hereafter is more complete than all the previous stages because) Absolute completeness is given to man in the Hereafter – a complete life that cannot be compared to this worldly life with regards to any aspect.

How do we believe in the Last Day?

Faith in the Last Day is to believe that mankind will be resurrected and recompensed for their deeds. It is to believe in everything that has come to us in the Book and the Sunnah concerning the description of that Day.

Allah has vividly described that Day such as the following verse, "O mankind! Fear your Lord and be dutiful to Him! Verily, the earthquake of the Hour (of Judgment) is a terrible thing. The Day you shall see it, every nursing mother will forget her nursling and every pregnant one will drop her load, and you shall see mankind as in a drunken state. Yet they will not be drunk but severe will be the Torment of Allah." [Soorah al-Hajj (22): 1-2]

There are numerous descriptions of the Last Day in the Quran and the Sunnah that testify to the horror and terrible nature of this Day.

Faith in the Last Day is not limited to believing in the Day that will be established after resurrection, as Shaikhul-Islam ibn Taymiyyah (rahimahullah) writes in Aqeedah al-Wastiyyah,

> "Faith in the Last Day includes believing in everything that the Messenger has informed us about that will happen after death."

1. Fitnah of the Grave

The first stage after death is the fitnah of the grave. The people will face trial or will be tested in their graves regardless of whether one is buried in the ground or is thrown in the sea or is eaten by a lion or (his ashes are) dispersed in the wind. He will face this fitnah and he will be asked about three matters;

a) Who is your Lord?
b) What is your Religion?
c) Who is your Prophet?

A believer will reply, 'My Lord is Allah, my religion is Islam and my Prophet is Muhammad ﷺ.' Then a caller will call from the heavens that my slave has spoken the truth.

His grave will then be widened for him as far as his eyes can see. It will be furnished with furnishings from Paradise. A door will be opened into Paradise through which will come its fragrance and blessings. This condition is without doubt more complete than his condition in the world.

A disbeliever or hypocrite will say upon being asked about his Lord, Religion and Prophet, 'Oh, Oh, I don't know. I heard the people say something and I said it.'

Reflect upon what, 'Oh, Oh,' means. It indicates that the slave recollects something, tries to recall it but is unable to remember.

One's inability to recall is more distressing than being completely unaware. If you are asked about something and you are unaware of it, you will say, 'I don't know.' This is without doubt deficiency but it does not cause grief - but if you are asked about something and you knew it but you are incapable of recalling it - this causes grief.

So the disbeliever will say, 'Oh, Oh.' - as if he remembers something - "I don't know. I heard the people say something and I said it."

The disbeliever will then be hit with a large iron hammer whereupon he will let out a scream the sound of which will be heard by everything except the jinn and mankind – because if they were to hear it, they would be struck dumb. It is narrated that if all the people of a city like Mina were to gather together to carry this hammer, they would not be able to.

It is obligatory to believe in the Fitnah of the grave because believing in it is part of faith in the Last Day.

Question: How can belief in the fitnah of the grave be part of faith in the Last Day whereas the fitnah of the grave occurs in this world?

Reply: When a man dies, his day of Judgment has been established (and thus fitnah of the grave is part of faith in the Last Day).

2. Punishment of the Grave and its Blessings

Punishment of the grave and its blessings are included in faith in the Last Day. The proof is the Saying of Allah, “Allah rewards the pious. Those whose lives the angels take while they are in a pious state saying (to them), 'Salamun Alaikum enter you Paradise because of (the good) which you used to do (in the world)." [(16): 31-32]

The words that are proof in this verse are, "Those whose lives the angels take while they are in a pious state saying (to them), 'Salamun Alaikum (peace be on you) enter you Paradise because of (the good) which you used to do (in the world)."

They (the pious) will not be entering Paradise - which is as wide as the heavens and the earth – rather they will enter the grave in which is a blessing from Paradise. Allah also says, “Then why do you not (intervene) when (the soul of a dying person) reaches the throat? And you at the moment are looking on. But We (i.e. Our angels who take the soul) are nearer to him than you, but you see not. Then why do you not, if you are exempt from the reckoning and recompense (punishment, etc.) bring back the soul (to its body) if you are truthful? Then, if he (the dying person) be of the Muqarraboon (those brought near to Allah), (There is for him) rest and provision, and a Garden of delights (Paradise).” [Soorah al-Waqi'ah (56): 83-89]

This is when the soul reaches the throat. The verse mention the blessings of the grave rather man is given the glad-tiding of the

blessings before his soul departs. It is said to his soul, “Come out, O you soul al-Mutma'innah. Come out to the forgiveness and Pleasure of your Lord." So the soul is pleased and comes out swiftly.

As for the proof from the Sunnah, the Prophet ﷺ has mentioned in numerous ahadeeth that man is blessed in his grave, and we have already mentioned some of them.

The punishment of the grave is also proven from the Book and the Sunnah. Allah says about the people of Fir'awn, “The Fire; they are exposed to it, morning and afternoon.” This takes place before the establishment of the Hour.

Allah further mentions in continuation of the verse, “and on the Day when the Hour will be established (it will be said to the angels), "Cause Fir'aun's people to enter the severest torment!" [Soorah al-Ghafir (40): 46]

Allah also says, “if you could but see when the Dhalimoon (polytheists and wrongdoers, etc.) are in the agonies of death while the angels are stretching forth their hands (saying): "Deliver your souls!” [Soorah al-An'am (6): 93]

These (souls of the) dhalimun (disbelievers, polytheist) will defer from coming out because they will be given the tidings of punishment - we seek Allah's refuge from it. The souls hesitate and do not want to come out of the body in order to escape from what they are promised.

"Deliver your souls! This day you shall be recompensed with the torment of degradation because of what you used to utter against Allah other than the truth. And you used to reject His Ayaat (proofs, evidences, verses, lessons, signs, revelations, etc.) with disrespect!" [Soorah al-An'am (6): 93]

The words that are the proof in this verse are; “This day you shall be recompensed.”

'this (day)' in this verse means the present (day) like in the Saying of Allah, “This Day I have completed your religion for you."

Accordingly, 'this day' is, 'the day of death' for the dhalimoon.

Allah says, “But if he (the dying person) be of the deniers (of the Resurrection), the erring, then for him is entertainment with boiling water.” [Soorah al-Waqi'ah (56): 92-94]

We say in the Salaat (prayers),

أعوذ بالله من عذاب جهنم ومن عذاب القبر

“We seek Allah's refuge from the torment of Hell and from the torment of the grave.”

So, the torment of the grave is proven from the Qur'an and the Sunnah and believing in it is from faith in the Last Day.

Is the Torment in the grave for the body or the soul?

The torment in the grave is primarily for the soul but perhaps, it reaches the body too. However, it does not mean that the body is not affected by it at all. The body does certainly suffer from the torment or enjoy the blessing although it may not be visible to us.

The torment in the grave is the opposite of the torment or blessing in the world. The torment or blessing in the world is upon the body and it also affects the soul while in the Barzakh the blessings or the torment is upon the soul and it also affects the body.

Question: How can you say that the grave closes upon the disbeliever until his ribs interlock into each other whereas if we were to open the grave we would find that neither the grave has changed nor is the body affected?

Reply: The torment of the grave is primarily on the soul and is not something which shows upon the body. If it was obvious upon the body then it would not have been from faith in the Ghayb (unseen) and it would not reap any benefits. But faith in the torment of the grave is from the issues of the Ghayb which are related to the soul.

A man could see in his dream that he is standing, leaving and returning, he is hitting and he is hit despite the fact that he had been asleep in his bed all the while. Man could see whilst he is asleep in his bed that he traveled for Umrah, he performed the Tawaaf and Sa'ee, he shaved his head or cut short his hair, and then returned back to his country – and all the while his body is in his bed without any movement. So, the conditions of the soul are not like the conditions of the body.

الله يبعث الأجساد يوم القيامة حفاة عراة غرلاً

3. Resurrection

Allah, the Exalted, will raise the bodies on the Day of Judgment barefooted, naked and uncircumcised.

Barefooted: without any sandals or shoes, i.e., they will have no covering for the foot.

Naked: without clothes

Uncircumcised: without circumcision

Some ahadeeth also mention, 'Buhman' – i.e., without any wealth. Everyone will posses his deeds only.

Resurrection (on the Day of Judgment) means reformation and does not mean a new creation as Allah says, "Who will give life to these bones when they have rotted away and became dust? Say, He will give life to them Who created them for the first time!" [Soorah Ya-Sin (36): 79]

If it was a new creation, then the body which committed evil deeds in this world would be safe from the torment while the new body would be tormented. This is against justice. Texts (of the religion) and intellect testify that resurrection will not be in a new body but it will be returning (of the soul to the body).

Question: How will the resurrection take place? Man might be dead, (his body) might be eaten by a lion and as such his flesh turns into blood flowing in the animal, etc.

Reply: Allah – the One, Who has power over everything – the One, Who says to the thing 'be' and it is -

He will order these bodies which have been dispersed, eaten or scattered in the wind - to return and they will return. This belief is based upon the previously mentioned principle,

'It is obligatory upon man to accept all news concerning the Ghayb (without asking how or why).'

After having heard the words of Allah's Messenger ﷺ that the people will be resurrected barefooted, naked and uncircumcised, Aaisha (radhi Allahu anha) asked, 'Will the men and women be looking at each other?' The Prophet ﷺ replied, 'The issue will be far more serious than they (would care to) look at each other.'

So, on that day no one will look at another because Allah says, "That Day man shall flee from his brother and from his mother and his father and from his wife and his children. Everyman - that Day - will have enough to make him careless of others." [Soorah Abasa (80): 34-37] - to the extent that man will even forget his offspring and relatives, "When the Trumpet is blown, there will be no kinship among them that Day, nor will they ask of one another." [Soorah al-Mu'minoon (23): 101]

دنو الشمس من الخلائق بمقدار ميل

4. Closeness of the sun to the creation

From our faith in the Last Day is that we believe that the sun will be brought close to the creation
- as close as a 'meel.'

‘Meel' here could mean the stick which is used to apply kohl in the eyes or it could mean the distance of one mile – in either of these situations - the sun will be close to people’s heads.

Question: Today we know that if the sun was even a hand-span closer to us than it is - it would burn the earth. So how is it possible that the sun will be as close as a 'meel' to the creation on the Day of Judgment?

Reply: It is the duty of the Mu'min (the believer) – and our beliefs must be based upon this principle,

"to accept the information concerning the issues of the Ghayb without asking how and why?"

The issues of ghayb are beyond your imagination and therefore it is obligatory upon you to accept and say, 'We believe and testify that the sun will be brought close to the creation on the day of Judgment as close as a meel.' Any further questioning is a Bidah (innovation) and therefore

when Imam Malik (rahimahullah) was asked about Istiwa (Rising) of Allah (upon the throne) – how does he Istawa? He replied, "Questioning about it is Bidah."

Similarly questioning about any issue of the unseen is an innovation. One's attitude concerning them should be to accept and submit.

Another reply is that bodies on that Day will not be resurrected in their deficient state as in this world - incapable of bearing (the heat). Bodies will be resurrected in a complete form and therefore the people will stand on the Day of Judgment for a day whose length will be fifty thousand years without food and drink - which is not possible in this world.

So the sun will be brought close and bodies will be given the ability to bear its closeness – and the standing for fifty thousand years without food and drink testifies to this.

(another example is that) One of the people of Paradise will look into his kingdom that will be spread as far as thousand years and he will be able to see its farthest point as he sees its closest point which is also not possible in this world.

So, the bodies on the Day of Judgment are different from the bodies in this world.

5. Accounting the people for their deeds

Allah has called the Last Day, 'Yawm al-Hisaab' - 'The Day of Account' because it is the Day when mankind will be held accountable for their deeds but is this account like the negotiation by money between two traders?

No. For the believer, the accounting will be with kindness, blessing and mercy from Allah. Allah will bring the believer close and conceal him and will make him confess his sins. Allah will say, "You committed this on this day..." until the believer will admit and confess (his sins). Allah will say to him, "I concealed your sins for you in the world and I forgive you today."

None of us is free from sins - hidden sins are (of two kinds) those that are related to the heart and (the other are those) outward sins that are related to the bodies but people do not see it. Perhaps a man looks at something with a forbidden intention while you might think that he has a permissible intention – you don't know and therefore, Allah says, "Allah knows the fraud of the eyes and all that the breasts conceal." [Soorah Ghafir (40): 19]

The fraud of the eyes is a matter concerning one's feeling but no one knows it - who can know that this eye is looking with the intention of a permissible act?

"and all that the breasts conceal." This is hidden. Allah says, 'I covered them for you in the world and I will forgive them for you this day.'

The disbelievers will not be held accountable in this (kind) way. They will be made to confess and they will be told, 'you committed this and this.' If they deny, their tongues, hands and legs will testify to their (evil) deeds - even their skin will testify against them, “And they will say to their skins, ‘Why do you testify against us?’”

They (the body parts) will say, "Allah has caused us to speak as He causes all things to speak, and He created you the first time and to Him you are made to return. You have not been hiding against yourselves, lest your ears and your eyes and your skins testify against you but you thought that Allah knew not much of what you were doing. And that thought of yours which you thought about your Lord, has brought you to destruction, and you have become (this Day) of those utterly lost!” Then, (even) if they have patience - the Fire will be a home for them. (even) if they beg to be excused - they are not of those who will ever be excused." [Soorah Fussilat (41): 21-24]

The disbelievers will confess their deeds and they will be made to face humiliation due to their deeds, "and the witnesses will say, "These are the ones who lied against their Lord!" No doubt! the curse of Allah is on the Dhalimoon (polytheists, wrong-doers, oppressors, etc.)." [Soorah Hud (11): 18] So look at the difference between the account of the believer and the disbeliever.

Question: Will there be anyone who will escape the account?

Reply: Yes, a group will escape the account, Allah's Messenger ﷺ said that he was shown his nation and seventy thousand of them are those who will enter Paradise without being brought to account. “They are the ones who do not seek ruqya, do not believe in bad omens and do not use branding; they put their trust in their Lord...” [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

توزن الأعمال يوم القيامة بميزان

6. The Balance

"The weighing on that day (of Resurrection) will be the true (weighing)." [Soorah al-A'raf (7): 8]

"We shall set up balances of justice on the Day of Resurrection." [Soorah al-Anbiya (21): 47]

The weighing of deeds on the Day of Judgment will take place with a scale with two pans, on one pan will be placed the good deeds and the evil deeds on the other.

From the apparent meaning of the texts, we understand that actions will be weighed. "So whosoever does good equal to the weight of an atom shall see it. Whosoever does evil equal to the weight of an atom shall see it." [Soorah az-Zalzalah (99): 7-8]

The Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Two words that are beloved to Allah, are light on the tongue but heavy on the scale,

سبحان الله وبحمده، سبحان الله العظيم

'SubhanAllahi wa-biHamdihi SubhanAllahil-Adheem.' [Saheeh al-Bukharee, Chapter The Virtue of Praising Allah] pg.35

So, this scale will be setup for weighing the deeds of creation.

Question: How will the deeds be weighted since they are attributes and actions of the doers?

Reply to this question is the previously mentioned principle, "We are obliged to accept and submit and there is no need to ask how or why."

However the scholars have said in reply to this question that the actions will have bodies that will be placed in the pans. Actions will either be heavy or light. The scholars gave the instance of what is authentically known from the hadeeth reported by Imam Muslim from Abu Sa'eed that the Messenger of Allah ﷺ said, "Death will be brought like horned ram and will be made to stand between Paradise and Hell." It will be said, "O people of Paradise, do you know what this is?"

They will raise their heads, look and say, "Yes, this is death."

It will be said, "O people of Hell, do you know what this is?"

They will raise their heads, look and say, "Yes, this is death."

Then the command will be given for death to be slaughtered. Then it will be said, "O people of Paradise, it is eternal, there is no death. O people of Hell, it is eternal, there is no death..."

We all know that death is an attribute but Allah will give it a shape of itself and similarly the actions (will also be given a body).

Question: Is there one scale or many?

Reply: The scholars are divided into two groups with regards to this issue because there are texts which mention one scale for each person and there are texts which mention one scale for all, like

"We shall set up balances of justice..."
[Soorah al-Anbiya (21): 47]

"So as for those whose scale (of good deeds) will be heavy." [Soorah al-A'raf (7): 8]

and in the saying of Allah's Messenger ﷺ, "heavy on the scale." [Saheeh al-Bukharee]

Some of the scholars say that the scale is one but it is a plural form considering that which will be weighed in it or considering the plurality of nations - one scale in which will be weighed the actions of Prophet Muhammad's ﷺ nation and in another will be weighed the actions of Prophet Moosa's عليه السلام nation and the other for the actions of Prophet Eesa's عليه السلام nation.

Those scholars who are of the opinion that the scale is of different types say that Allah will set a separate balance for every nation or (He will set different balances) for obligatory action and (a different balance for) recommended action.

Allah knows best but what appears is that the scale is one but it is (mentioned) in plural form considering that which will be weighed in it.

نشر الكتب بين الناس

7. Distribution of the Books

Books of deeds will be given to the people and they will differ regarding their manner of receiving them. Some will receive their books with their right hand while the others will receive it with their left hand. Allah pointed out this in Soorah al-Haqqah,

“As for him (the believer) who will be given his record in his right hand will say (being glad and pleased with it), "Take, read my Record! Surely, I did believe that I shall meet my Account!" So he shall be in a life, well-pleasing. In a lofty Paradise, the fruits in bunches whereof will be low and near at hand. Eat and drink at ease for that which you have sent on before you in days past!

But as for him who will be given his Record in his left hand will be distressed and he will say, "I wish that I had not been given my Record! And that I had never known how my Account is?" [Soorah al-Haqqah (69): 19]

In this book will be recorded the deeds of mankind as Allah says, "Nay! But you deny the Recompense (reward for good deeds and punishment for evil deeds). But verily, over you (are appointed angels in charge of mankind) to watch you, Kiraman (honorable) Katibeen (writing down your deeds)." [Soorah al-Infitar (82): 9-11] and it will be said to man, "Read your book. You yourself are sufficient as a reckoner against yourself this Day." [Soorah al-Isra (17): 14]

Some scholars said, (this verse means), "Allah did justice to you by making you a sufficient reckoner against yourself."

Question: It is obligatory upon us to believe that books will be distributed on the Day of Judgment from the right and from the left but in Soorah al-Inshiqaaq, Allah says, "Whosoever is given his Record behind his back." [Soorah al-Inshiqaq (84): 10]

How do we reconcile between the Saying of Allah, "He, who will be given his Record in his left hand." [Soorah al-Haqqah (84): 25] and, "Whosoever is given his Record behind his back." [Soorah al-Inshiqaq (84): 10]

Reply: The disbeliever will take his record by his left hand but his left hand will be dislocated behind his back. This is a recompense for his similar act (of putting the Book of Allah behind his back). So, just like he put the Book of Allah behind his back, he will be given his book (of deeds) on the Day of Judgment from behind his back – a recompense equivalent to his act!

حوض النبي، صلى الله عليه وسلم

8. al-Hawdh (the Cistern)

The Hawdh of Prophet Muhammad ﷺ is a vast cistern – may Allah make us amongst those who drink from it. Its width and length are equivalent to a month (journey). The number and beauty of its vessels are like the stars of the sky. Its water is whiter than milk, sweeter than honey and (its fragrance is) better than the fragrance of musk.

He, who drinks from this Hawdh will never ever feel thirsty. The water of the Hawdh extends from al-Kawthar which is a river given to the Prophet ﷺ in Paradise from where two channels flow into the Hawdh. The Hawdh will always remain full and the believers will come to it and drink from it. This Hawdh will be at the place of gathering on the Day of Judgment when the people will be grieved and trouble due to heat and fatigue. So, they will drink from it and never ever feel thirsty.

الشفاعة وشروطها

9. Shafa'ah

Shafa'ah is of two types:

The first type is the Shafa'ah that is exclusive for Prophet Muhammad ﷺ

The second type of Shafa'ah is general for all the prophets, siddiqeen, martyrs and righteous

Shafa'ah that is exclusive to Allah's Messenger ﷺ is al-Shafa'ah al-Udhma. It will be for the account to begin. On the Day of Judgment, the people will be overtaken by suffering and grief because they will be standing for fifty thousand years while the sun will be over their heads. Some of them will be surrounded by their sweat.

People will thus look for someone to intercede with Allah on their behalf and rescue them from their suffering. They will go to Adam عليه السلام, who is the father of mankind. They will ask him to intercede but Adam عليه السلام will refuse because he had disobeyed Allah by eating from the forbidden tree.

Question: Adam's ﷺ sin of eating from the forbidden tree is a sin which he repented for and then Allah chose him and gave him guidance. "Thus did Adam disobey his Lord, so he went astray. Then his Lord chose him and turned to him with forgiveness and gave him guidance." [Soorah Ta-Ha (20): 121-122] (So, why will Adam ﷺ refuse to intercede?)

Reply: Yes. Allah did say that after Adam committed the sin and sought forgiveness, "Then his Lord chose him" and made him from among the guided. But Adam will refuse to intercede giving the excuse of eating from the tree because the position of intercession is a great position which requires that the intercessor be pure/upright with regards to everything since the intercessor seeks intercession on behalf of others. So if he is himself guilty, how can he be an intercessor?

The people will thus go to Nuh ﷺ and ask him to intercede but he will refuse because he had once asked for something which he had no knowledge of. He asked Allah to save his disbelieving son from drowning, "Nuh called upon his Lord and said, "O my Lord! Verily, my son is of my family! Certainly, Your Promise is true, and You are the Most Just of the judges."

He (Allah) said, "O Nuh! Surely, he is not of your family. Verily, his work is unrighteous. So ask not of Me that of which you have no knowledge! I admonish you, lest you be one of the ignorant." [Soorah Hud (11): 45-46] So, Nuh ﷺ will refuse to intercede.

The people will then come to the Khaleel of Allah, Ibraheem عليه السلام, who too will refuse to intercede because he had lied thrice – although, those were not lies in reality. Those were apparently the truth but the intent was contrary to the apparent and so they were likened to falsehood in some way. It is due to Ibraheem's perfect etiquette towards Allah that he will refuse to intercede.

The people will come to Moosa عليه السلام, who will also refuse to intercede because he killed a man without being commanded to do so.

> The man referred to was killed unrightfully. Moosa عليه السلام came out and saw two men fighting; one was from his followers Bani Israeel and the other was from his enemy Aqbat. Moosa's عليه السلام follower called for help over the enemy. Moosa عليه السلام was a strong man and so the man died when Moosa عليه السلام pushed him. As such Moosa عليه السلام killed him before being ordered to do so and thus Moosa عليه السلام will refuse to intercede.

The people will then come to Eesa عليه السلام who will not confess any sin rather he will acknowledge the position of Allah's Messenger ﷺ and say, "Go to Muhammad ﷺ - Allah has forgiven all his past and future sins." So they will come to the Prophet ﷺ and ask him to intercede.

The Prophet ﷺ will intercede with Allah and then Allah will descend to judge between His slaves. This intercession is called al-Shafa'ah al-Udhma (the Great Intercession). (The right to intercede for al-Shafa'ah al-Udhma) is al-Maqaam al-Mahmood mentioned in the Saying of Allah, "It may be that your Lord will raise you to Maqaman Mahmooda." [Soorah al-Isra (17): 79]

So Allah's Messenger ﷺ will intercede and Allah will descend to judge between his slaves and relieve them from this (long) standing.

The Shafa'ah that are exclusive to the Prophet ﷺ also include interceding for the people of paradise to enter Paradise. After having passed over as-Siraat (the bridge), the people of Paradise will reach the door of Jannah but they will find it locked. The Prophet ﷺ will intercede with Allah to open the door of Paradise for them as Allah mentioned, "those who kept their duty to their Lord will be led to Paradise in groups till when they reach it and its gates will be opened." [Soorah az-Zumar (39): 73]

Allah did not say, 'until when they reach it, the gates thereof will be opened' as He said about the people of Fire, "those who disbelieved will be driven to Hell in groups, till when they reach it, the gates thereof will be opened." [Soorah az-Zumar (39): 71]

Allah said about the people of Paradise, "when they reach it, and its gates will be opened" because the gates will not be opened until after the intercession.

The common Shafa'ah which is for the Prophets, Siddiqeen, martyrs and the righteous will be of two kinds:

First: Shafa'ah for the believers to be taken out from the Fire.

Second: Shafa'ah for the believers who deserve the Fire – to be saved from entering the Fire.

The Conditions of Shafa'ah are three;

i) The Pleasure of Allah with the intercessor
ii) The Pleasure of Allah with the one, on behalf of whom the intercession is requested
iii) The Permission of Allah

The proof are the following verses,

"There are many angels in the heavens whose intercession will avail nothing except after Allah has given leave for whom He wills and pleases." [Soorah an-Najm (53): 26]

"they cannot intercede except for him with whom He is pleased." [Soorah al-Anbiya (21): 28]

"Who is he that can intercede with Him except with His Permission?" [Soorah al-Baqarah (2): 255]

"On that day no intercession shall avail except the one for whom the Most Beneficent has given permission." [Soorah Ta-Ha (20): 109]

This Shafa'ah will not benefit the disbelievers because Allah is not pleased with them. It is a condition of Shafa'ah that Allah is pleased with the one, on behalf of whom the Shafa'ah is requested. Therefore the idols of the mushrikeen whom the mushrikeen cling to and say, 'they are our intercessors with Allah,' will not benefit them and will not intercede for them rather they will increase their grief because Allah said, "Certainly! You (disbelievers) and that which you are worshipping now besides Allah are fuel for Hell!" [Soorah al-Anbiya (21): 98] So the idols' being the fuel of Fire will increase the sorrow of the disbelievers.

الصراط، وهو عبارة عن جسر ممدود على النار

10. The Siraat

The Siraat is a Bridge that extends above the Fire. The people will pass over the bridge according to their deeds; some will pass like the twinkling of an eye, some will pass like lightning and some will pass like wind. All those who were quick in accepting the truth and following it will quickly pass through the bridge and whosoever was sluggish to say the truth and act upon it will be sluggish on the bridge.

Only the people of Paradise will pass over this bridge while the disbelievers will not pass over it because they are from the people of Fire – and we seek Allah's refuge – They will come to the Fire suffering from thirst.

11. Entrance into Paradise or Hell

This is the final stage when the people of Paradise will enter Paradise and the people of Hell will enter the Fire.

Question: Are Paradise and Hell present today?

Reply: Yes, Paradise and Hell are present today as is proven in the Book and the Sunnah. Allah says concerning the Fire, "Fear the Fire which is prepared for the disbelievers." [Soorah aali-Imran (3): 131] 'prepared' means readiness.

Allah says about Paradise, "March forth in the way (which leads to) forgiveness from your Lord, and for Paradise as wide as are the heavens and the earth, prepared for the pious." [Soorah aali-Imran (3): 133]

(here again) prepared means readiness.

As for proof from the Sunnah, it is established in the two Saheehs and in other (books of Hadeeth) in the story of the eclipse of the sun that the Messenger ﷺ stood for Salaat, and Paradise and Hell were shown to him and he witnessed Paradise until he intended to reach a bunch of grapes from it but he did not take it. He ﷺ saw Fire and saw Amar ibn Luhay al-Khuza'ee dragging his intestines that were hanging from his stomach. We seek Refuge with Allah from the Fire of Hell.

He was tormented because he was the first man who introduced Shirk amongst the Arabs. As a result, he was given a share of punishment for what he introduced and that was followed after him.

He ﷺ also saw a woman being tormented in the Fire because of a cat that was under her care and it died because she did not feed it, nor let it out to eat from the vermin of the earth.... [See, Saheeh al-Bukharee]

This proves that Paradise and Hell are present now.

Question: Are Paradise and Hell eternal?

Reply: Paradise and Hell are eternal and they will remain forever. The proof concerning Paradise in the Qur'an is the Saying of Allah, "Verily, those who believe and do righteous good deeds, they are the best of creatures. Their reward with their Lord is 'Adn Paradise, underneath which rivers flow, they will abide therein forever, Allah is Well-Pleased with them, and they with Him." [Soorah al-Bayyinah (98): 7-8]

Allah mentioned the eternity of Hell in 3 verses of the Qur'an,

In Soorah an-Nisa, "Verily, those who disbelieve and did wrong, Allah will not forgive them nor will He guide them to any way. Except the way of Hell to dwell therein forever and this is ever easy for Allah." [Soorah an-Nisa (4): 168-169]

In Soorah al-Ahzab, "Verily, Allah has cursed the disbelievers and has prepared for them a flaming Fire (Hell). Wherein they will abide forever and they will find neither a protector nor a helper." [Soorah al-Ahzab (33): 64-65]

In Soorah al-Jinn, "Whosoever disobeys Allah and His Messenger then verily for him is the Fire of Hell, he shall dwell therein forever." [Soorah al-Jinn (72): 23]

It is thus proven by the clear verses of the Qur'an that the saying that Fire will be destroyed is a very weak saying which cannot be relied upon because it is not possible to rely upon a saying which is contrary to what the Qur'an has clearly explained. Rather it is not permitted for us to rely upon such a saying.